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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: Mideast, Iran, France

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- [1](#)1. Lead Stories Summary

Editorials focused on President Khler's keynote speech and the reaction to his appeals, and on the reform of the French armed forces. ZDF-TV's early evening newscast heute opened with a report on the German victory in the European soccer championships, and ARD-TV's early evening newscast Tagesschau opened with a story on President Khler's speech.

- [1](#)2. (Mideast) Israeli-Hamas Peace Talks

All German media carry straight-forward reports saying that Israel and Hamas agreed on a ceasefire. S|ddeutsche Zeitung comments: "For one year we heard only horrific news from the Gaza Strip. Since Hamas assumed power in June 2007, the people there bear the burden of the Israeli blockade -- and Islamists fire rockets at Israel in return. Now, we have the first good news from Gaza.... The truce does not yet mean that peace will be created, but it is a ray of hope after a long period of darkness. Both sides need a breather." Under the headline "Deceptive Calm," Handelsblatt comments: "We can breathe a sigh of relief: Israel and Hamas seem to be coming together. Both accept the Egyptian proposal for a truce and are prepared to renounce violence as of Thursday. But the motives for their agreement are worrying because they are not of a peaceful nature. Israel and Hamas have made concessions because they are interested in a ceasefire.... Israel wants to prove that it has exhausted all diplomatic means before it begins a planned military operation in the Gaza Strip.... Hamas will try to use the ceasefire to solidify its position in Gaza."

- [1](#)3. (Iran) Nuclear Program

Under the headline "Nuclear Endgame," FT Deutschland editorializes: "The end of the diplomatic path has not been reached but the prospects for its success are limited. International sanctions depend on how far UN Security Council members Russia and China are prepared to go. In Germany, any attempt for tougher sanctions is

accompanied by complaints from German companies, saying that this destroys their business. Some politicians go even further and call for closer relations with Iran to secure their oil and gas resources.... And others seem ready to accept an Iranian bomb. This cannot be an option for Germany and Europe. Israel will defend itself militarily if necessary. It does not help to shut your eyes and hope for new political constellations." Handelsblatt comments: "The U.S. must ultimately offer Iran direct talks and guarantee that they will not topple the regime from outside. Only then will the mullahs comply. If they don't, at least there will be a solid, broad, and legitimate foundation to impose very tough economic sanctions."

14. (France) White Book On Defense

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung writes that the measures that French President Sarkozy announced in the White Book on defense must be seen the context of a fundamental change of France's defense policy: the reintegration of the French armed forces into NATO's structures.

The paper notes: "The details have not yet been negotiated, but since the United States has given up its former fundamental resistance to European defense, it seems that all sides involved have agreed on the reintegration." The paper concludes: "... [it] is a deep cut in France's foreign policy: its military presence in Africa, the precious symbol of its faded claim as a leading world power, will be strongly reduced."

Die Welt writes that France is now modernizing the armed forces and "is finally bidding farewell to the Cold War.... [and] discarding the principles of de Gaulle's foreign policy." The daily notes that in the distant future, it might even be possible to implement Kennedy's dream of the two pillars of defense, but as a first step, Germans and British should do everything to support Sarkozy's policy. "More important than European forces is a strong united NATO," the paper argues, and concludes: "Those who doubt this should keep the following scenario in mind: the United States withdraws from Iraq, Iran threatens to use the bomb, and Afghanistan again falls into the hands of terrorists."

Tagesspiegel editorializes that it is regrettable that President Sarkozy declared the establishment of a European defense one of his priorities during France's EU presidency and that he did so without prior consultations with his partners. The daily goes on to say: "This does not bode well for the upcoming EU talks on a new effort to set up a common security and defense policy." The daily also wonders what Sarkozy's speech means with respect to France's return to NATO. "In his White Book, he stressed France's role as an 'independent' and 'free' Alliance partner." De Gaulle set up the same principles for leaving the military structure of the Alliance. "This is a contradiction that needs to be clarified," the daily concludes.

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